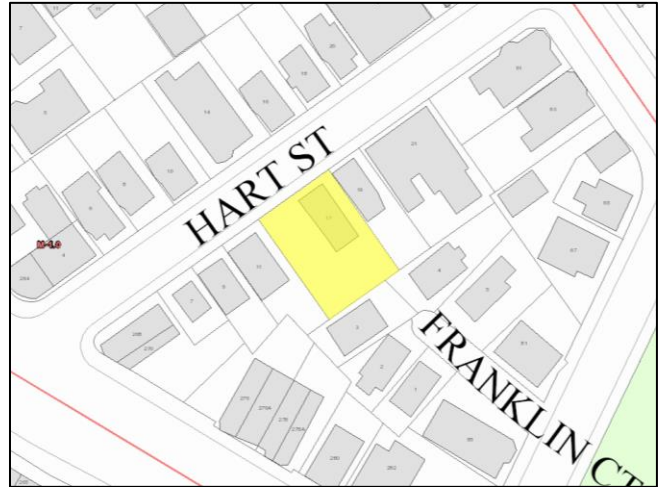


Brookline Preservation Commission

Demolition Application Report

Address: 17 Hart Street
Applicant: Alexander R. Neary & Zi Ye
Building Type: House (Full)
National Register Listing (if Applicable): None



Historical/Architectural Significance:

17 Hart Street is one of a group of workers houses built on a plot of land off Boylston Street in the 1840's by Captain Benjamin Bradley, who maintained them as rental properties for Irish immigrant families. These cottages were simple gabled 2 story timber frames. Captain Bradley was said to be a kind and generous landlord, though was also given to eccentricities. According to John Gould Curtis's *History of Brookline*, he constructed a church out of an old barn on Bradley Hill, with a belfry placed deliberately to obstruct his neighbor's view of Boston. On Sundays he held services in his church and anyone who could drink a glass of whiskey straight could become a member of his parish. Captain Bradley sold the settlement to Samuel Hart in 1852, who continued to rent it as workers housing for several decades. In 1870 Hart moved the entire community, 30 buildings and about 200 inhabitants, to a marsh area on Sewall Street (now Cypress) so that he could sell the more valuable Boylston Street land for development. The area, known as Hart's Content, quickly developed a reputation for unsanitary conditions caused by standing water in basements. This outpost of worker's housing enlarged over time, becoming home to more Irish families relocating from Pearl Place in North Brookline and gaining the name Whiskey Point.

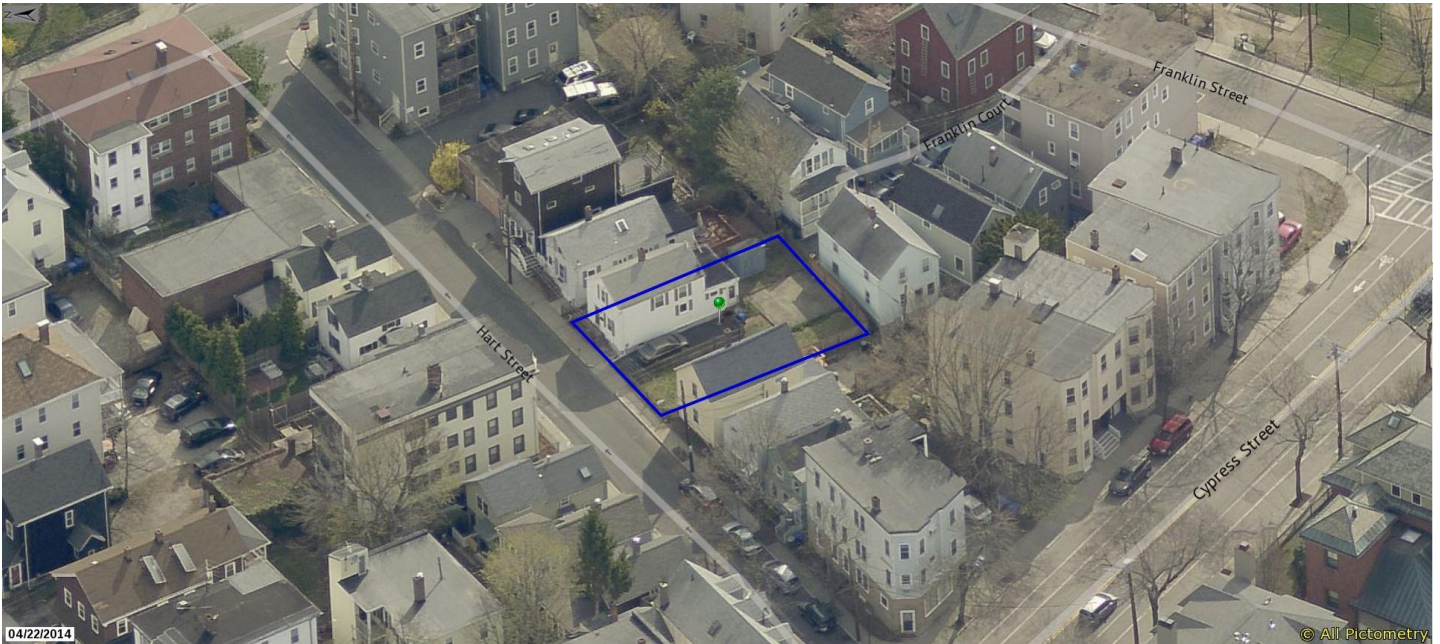
17 Hart Street remained a rental property until about 1893 when it was purchased by John McNamara. John, who was 60 years old at the time, lived there with his wife Nora. The couple had emigrated from Ireland in 1865; John worked as a laborer at the time of the 1893 census. The McNamara's lived at 17 Hart Street until at least 1913. By 1919, the home at #17 Hart St. and the empty lot at #15 Hart St. (the house at that address burned down between 1907 and 1910) were under common ownership, purchased by Patrick Cavanaugh. Patrick and his wife Mary were also Irish immigrants, arriving in the United States in 1901 and 1900 respectively. The couple had 6 children by 1920. In 1924 they built a Star Rite metal garage on the property for \$360.00; this garage was torn down in 1961, though the foundation remains.

The house at 17 Hart Street meets the following criteria for an initial determination of significance:

c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the town or Commonwealth; and

d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or builder, either by itself or as part of a group of buildings.

The building at 17 Hart Street retains integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, and workmanship.



Aerial view of 17 Hart Street, looking east.



Aerial view of 17 Hart Street, looking north.



Aerial view of 17 Hart Street, looking west.



Aerial view of 17 Hart Street, looking south.



17 Hart Street, views from Hart Street.

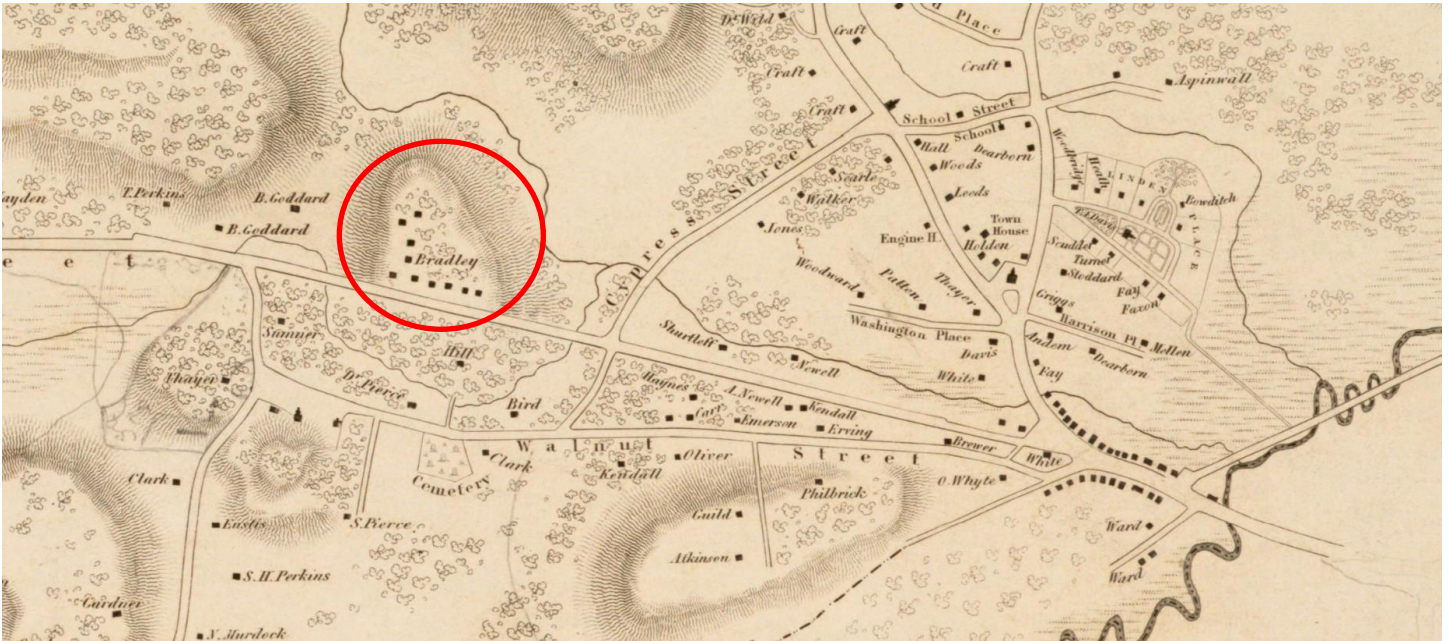




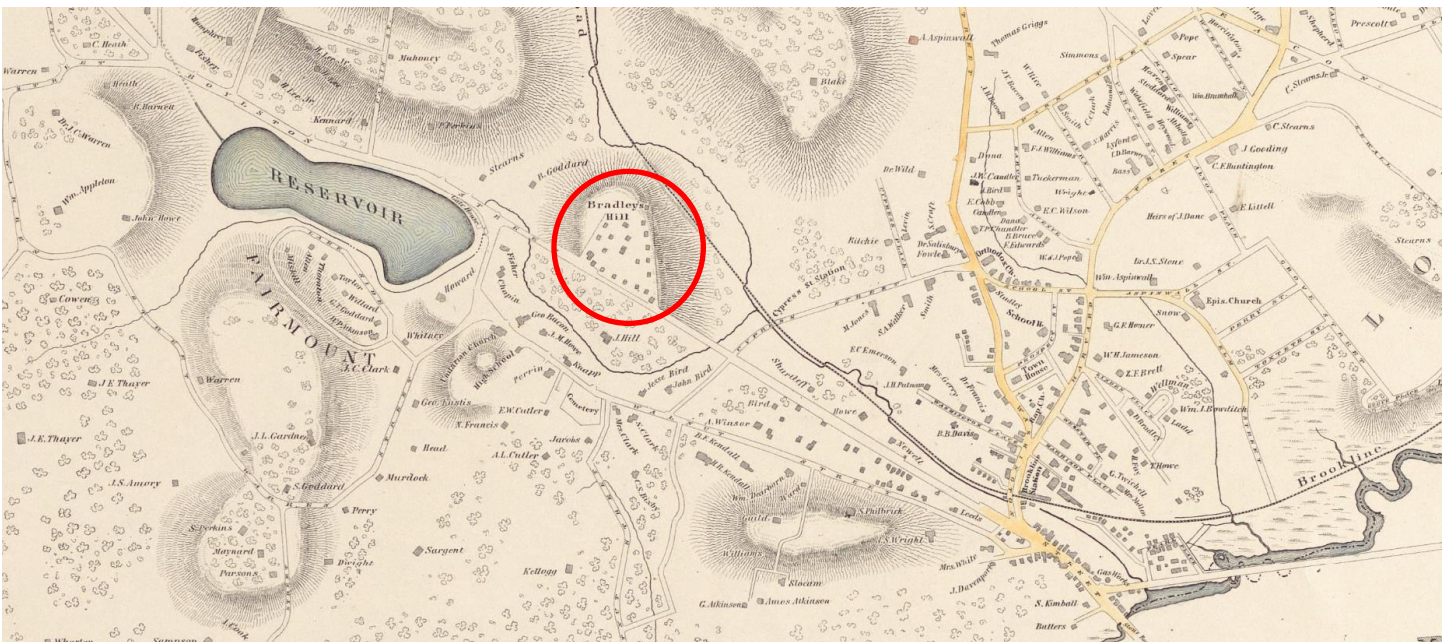


Streetscape views, Hart Street.





1844 Town of Brookline Map, showing the first group of homes built on Bradley Hill



1855 Town of Brookline Map, showing further development of Bradley Hill



1874 Town of Brookline Atlas, showing cottages in their new locations on Hart Street



Town of Brookline 1913 Atlas, showing further development of “Whiskey Point”



Typical framing details & wide floorboards for “Bradley Hill” cottages, contributed by Anne Lusk, owner of 18 Hart St.

